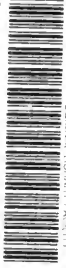


A
0
0
0
8
1
5
3
3
2
2



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY

PR
4079
B6
P4

Bayly, Thomas Haynes

Perfection

LIBRARY

University of California

IRVINE

No. XXXII.

MODERN STANDARD DRAMA.

EDITED BY EPES SARGENT,

AUTHOR OF "VELASCO, A TRAGEDY." &c.



P E R F E C T I O N : N

OR,

THE MAID OF MUNSTER.

A Farce

IN ONE ACT.

BY THOMAS HAYNES BAYLY.

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c



NEW-YORK:

WM. TAYLOR & CO. 

(S. FRENCH, GENERAL AGENT,)

151 NASSAU-STREET, CORNER OF SPRUCE.

PR
4079
B6
P4

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

THIS sparkling little afterpiece, so familiar to all play-goers, was originally produced at Drury Lane Theatre the 25th of March, 1830. Mr. Jones as *Charles Paragon*, and Madame Vestris as *Kate O'Brien*, sustained the two principal parts with great vivacity and ability; and a degree of success rarely bestowed on such dramatic trifles, has up to this time attended the piece. It is founded on a tale, which appeared in one of the "Annuals"; and the lively, drawing-room air, which pervades it, has been one great element of its exceeding popularity. It is not only one of the standing dishes at all our theatres, but is quite a favourite among those venturous young gentlemen and ladies, who mingle in private theatricals.

Thomas Haynes Bayly, the author of this and several other successful afterpieces, died at Cheltenham, England, the 22d of April, 1839. He was well known as one of the most graceful lyric poets of the age; and his songs have been deservedly popular. We need but enumerate "*The Pilot*," "*She Wore a Wreath of Roses*," "*The Soldier's Tear*," and "*Oh, no! we never mention her*," to prove that few modern ballad-writers have produced so many lyrics that are widely and well remembered.

In a notice of the death of this accomplished writer, the London Literary Gazette communicates the following facts respecting him:—"Mr. Bayly has been, we fear, another example of the sad and unfortunate lot of literary men. Born to good expectations, and married to a beautiful and accomplished woman, who brought him a considerable fortune, he began the world under the most favourable auspices, and mixed with the best society of the day. His expectations were, however, disappoint-

ed; and he could not fall back into a sufficiently economical course, till the pressure of circumstances impoverished him beyond a remedy. For it is difficult, if not impossible, for a person so situated to disentangle himself, and again enjoy a fair field for the exercise of his abilities. In England, poverty is the worst of crimes; and punished more unrelentingly than the deepest guilt. So did Mr. Bayly find it. Demand would not wait for the fruits of exertion; and no sooner was his head raised above the stormy waters to breathe for awhile, than it was ruthlessly plunged down again, and he was doomed to perish, as we have said another sad instance of the miserable fate of genius when once involved in pecuniary embarrassments. Mr. Bayly, besides his many beautiful songs, has written, we believe, thirty or forty pieces for the stage; and from these a comfortable provision might have been drawn. But, alas for the author in want! He must sell for what he can get, to supply immediate necessities; and sacrifice his birthright indeed for a mess of pottage!

“The public go nightly to theatres to laugh at ‘Tom Noddy’s Secret,’ or see ‘Perfection,’ or witness other popular productions; the drawing-room resounds with the touching melody of ‘Oh, no, we never mention her!’ or the playful strains of ‘I’d be a butterfly,’—whilst the writer is pining in sickness and distress, dying oppressed and unpitied. It is a thoughtless, a heartless, and a gloomy picture; but so it is, and rare is the occasion when struggling talent is taken by the hand, and lifted above the wrongs of life, or even allowed to lift itself. The avenger is quick, the saviour slow; until, as here, an early death releases the victim, and he sinks into that grave where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

“Mr. Bayly has left a widow and two children to bewail his premature loss.”

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Drury Lane, 1830.</i>	<i>Park, 1846.</i>	<i>Boston, 1846.</i>
<i>Sir Lawrence Paragon</i>	Mr. Jas. Brown.	Mr. Bass.	Mr. Gilbert.
<i>Charles Paragon</i>	“ Jones.	“ Dyott.	“ G. H. Barrett
<i>Sam (valet to Charles)</i>	“ Webster.	“ A. Andrews.	“ T. Placide.
<i>Footman</i>		“ Milot.	“ Adams.
<i>Kate O'Brien</i>	Madame Vestris.	Mrs. Chas. Kean.	Mrs. Bland.
<i>Susan (her maid)</i>	Mrs. Orger.	Mrs. Dyott.	Mrs. W. H. Smith

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*;
S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R., means *Right*; L., *Left*; C., *Centre*; R. C., *Right of Centre*;
L. C., *Left of Centre*.

N.B. Passages marked with Inverted Commas, are usually omitted in the representation.

P E R F E C T I O N .

A C T I .

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in Kate O'Brien's House.*

Enter SIR LAWRENCE and SUSAN, R.

Sus. THIS way, Sir Lawrence ; my mistress will be delighted to see you. Law, sir—you're looking better than ever, I protest.

Sir L. No, Susan, no—that won't do—better, perhaps, than when you saw me last, for I was then in a hobble with the gout ; but as for “better than ever,” oh ! Susan, you wouldn't say so, if you could have seen me five-and-twenty years ago. I certainly was a fine grown young man—*was*, how I hate the word !

“*Sus.* You're not married yet, Sir Lawrence ; more's the wonder, as I say to mistress ; and more's the pity, as I say to myself. That comes of being such a fine grown young man, you never could meet with your match. You'll excuse my freedom, sir, but you know Miss Kate and I were playfellows together, and she has quite spoiled me.”

“*Sir L.* It's my opinion, you'd take a great deal of spoiling : you're a very fine young woman, Susan, I say so—I, that am a judge, that is to say—*have* been a judge. What have I to do with fine women now ?”

Sus. What a pity it is, sir, that you are an old bachelor—I mean a single man.

Sir L. Oh ! out with it—an old bachelor ! there's a nick-name to break a man's heart with—old Nick's own

invention! But I've borne it for many a long year, and it's now too late to think of getting rid of it. Oh, if I had but married Laura Pennington!

Sus. Ah, sir! why didn't you do it, sir?

Sir L. Why Susan, the fact is—she was rather too short—not much—just a degree under my own standard; a sweet creature, though, and there was no other fault to find with her—possibly I was wrong. But then there was Araminta Skinner.

Sus. And pray, sir, what forbid the banns in that instance?

Sir L. I did, Susan: I managed to break off before I committed myself. I think she was growing partial to me; most young women did in those days; but all of a sudden it struck me, that she was a *little* too short, not much, but about an inch below my idea of *perfection*. Then there was Maria, sweet Maria.

Sus. Well, sir, and why didn't you make her Lady Paragon?

Sir L. She was just a shade too brown; afterwards I thought I should have married Louisa.

Sus. Well, what was her fault?

Sir L. She was just an atom too fair; then Fanny was too fat, and Theodosia was too thin, and somehow or other, in every girl I met, there was a something—

Sus. Not good enough for such a fine grown young man.

Sir L. Oh, Susan! don't banter me; 'tis no laughing matter; they have all got husbands, and *olive branches*, and all that sort of thing, now, and I am a fusty old bachelor! Perhaps it is not too late to mend, either—is it, Susan? hey, what say you? I always admired you vastly!

Sus. Ay, now 'tis your turn to banter; but if you were 'n earnest, before our wedding-day came, you'd find me *oo this, or too that, or too t'other*.

Sir L. No! upon my life, that's all gone by.

Sus. Indeed! then, perhaps, I might find the objection myself; I'm too—

Sir L. Too, what?

Sus. Too *young*! don't be angry, I'll send my mistress to you, sir—bring your nephew and your ward together,

if you can; I fear it's too late for you to think of matrimony. "If you will not when you may,"—you know the proverb—young bachelors, who are too hard to be pleased, must make the best of a life of single blessedness. [Exit, R.

Sir L. Oh! that's very true; but, confound it, there's no such thing as single blessedness; blessedness always comes double. Well, after all, if I can but bring about a match between my ward and nephew, it will be a consolation to me: they have never met, and I begin to fear he's as particular as I used to be. But if Kate O'Brien does not charm him, he must be difficult to please indeed. [*Kate sings without.*] Eh! that is her glorious voice.

Enter KATE, R.

My fair ward, welcome.

Kate. And welcome a thousand times, my dear old guardian; why, you look—

Sir L. Oh, don't talk about my looks; it's a sore subject; fiction can no longer impose me, and that's the devil! I look like a fusty old bachelor, and that's the fact—I wish it wasn't—but you look charmingly: why, we haven't met these two years; what a catalogue of conquests you must have to give me—but no *engagement*, I hope?

Kate. Why, in affairs of war, the engagement comes before the conquest, does it not?

Sir L. That may be, madcap! but in affairs of love, those eyes of yours vanquish, and then the engagement begins. But you are not engaged, I hope?

Kate. Indeed I am not; I am as free as air, and am likely to continue so. But why are you so anxious about the matter?—I thought you wished me to marry?

Sir L. So I do—I want you to marry a man you have never seen.

Kate. I thank you kindly, sir, but I would much rather look before I leap.

Sir L. So you shall look; and, after looking, if you will take the leap, old as I am, I shall jump for joy.

Kate. Well, sir, and pray where is the happy man, who is to make me the happy woman?

Sir L. He is at my house; he is my nephew—just like me, that is, just like what I *was* at his age.

Kate. Irresistible, then, of course; and is he as particular as you are reported to have been?

Sir L. Why, to say the truth, I am afraid he is—but that does not signify, for the more fastidious he is, the more will he appreciate your perfection. Had I met with any body like you in my *younger* days—

Kate. Oh, say no more, I guess the rest.

Sir L. My dear, I beg your pardon. I think I feel a draught; are you sure that door is shut?

Kate. I hear, sir—[*Runs to the door.*—quite.

Sir L. Bless your heart, how sensible you are—but is there not a nasty whistling wind through that key-hole?

Kate. Oh! if you had but married your first love, you never would have thought of that.

Sir L. Old bachelor's whims and fancies, hey? no matter, listed doors and sand-bagged windows are great comforts, notwithstanding. But we were talking of my nephew; when he marries, he says he must and will marry perfection.

Kate. Does he indeed? meaning, no doubt, that naught but perfection can pretend to match with him: well done, vanity!

Sir L. Don't blame the lad; I was just the same at his age.

Kate. And you have reaped the advantages of it—well, do you know I am just as particular as your nephew? I never mean to marry till I meet with—

Sir L. Perfection! hey?

Kate. No, Sir Lawrence, one peep will not do—I would rather he disliked me at the first peep, and loved me afterwards, than that he should be over head and ears in love with me at the first view, and I scarcely ancle deep, when I became his wife.

Sir L. This is all nonsense. I will send him to you, and I have no fears about the result; *in you* he will find the wife he wants, (that is) perfection. Good-bye, Kate; I'll bring him to you this very day. [Exit, l.]

Kate. Perfection, forsooth! well, I admire the man's vanity. To be trotted out like a steed for sale, and, if not deemed satisfactory, to be trotted in again. No, no! Kate O'Brien has too much spirit for that. They say I shall never marry; and if to all who pop questions, I continue

answering with that chilling monosyllable *no*, perchance I never may—well—

[*Song.*] “I’ll not believe it.”

[*Exit, R.*]

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at Sir Lawrence Paragon's.*

CHARLES *reading L. of table*, SAM *busying himself at table.*

Chas. Well! what are you fidgeting about?—do be quiet.

Sam. I’m putting to rights, sir. What a kind-hearted gentleman your uncle is—but quite thrown away, if I may presume to say such a thing. If he hadn’t been an old bachelor, he’d have been the snuggest elderly person I ever saw. Let it be a warning to you, sir, if I may be so bold; you’ve missed your opportunities before now, you know, and you may do that once too often.

Chas. Well, upon my word, free and easy.

Sam. Why, I didn’t serve you at Oxford, without knowing how to claim my privilege for old acquaintance. Do get a wife.

Chas. Hold your tongue, Sam. I never saw the woman yet, that I could conscientiously throw myself away upon.

Sam. If you please to give me leave, sir, I mean to alter my condition, as soon as I meet a genteel, comely body.

Chas. With all my heart: marry a plain cook, if you like.

Sam. No: a pretty ladies’ maid—I can’t help taking warning of your uncle—I’ll marry forthwith.

Chas. When you do, you’ll please to take warning of *me*, and find another place; I’ll have no encumbrance, no *soothing solace*, no *babes*, no *sucklings*, on my establishment; so, when you begin paying your addresses, I’ll pay you your wages—and when you mean to be any woman’s humble servant, please to remember you are no servant of mine.

Sam. Well, now, really, sir, that is very hard; what objection can you have to the hymeneal altar? yet I can’t help thinking that you’ll marry one of these days, notwithstanding.

Chas. When I *am*, you’ll find my wife a perfect wo-

man; and as that is a sight we are none of us likely to meet with, why, the probability is—that you'll go to the grave without seeing my wife. But having given you my opinion of your own matrimonial plans, you'll please to leave me to my fate; and moreover, as I see my uncle coming this way, you will do me the favour of leaving the room.

Sam. By all means, sir.—[*Aside.*] I see, my union, whenever I do make a selection, must be *clandestine*, for he'll never give me a special license: but I'll be church'd in spite of him. [*Exit, L.*

Enter SIR LAWRENCE PARAGON, L.

Sir L. I'm sure it is an east wind, for I have a pain in my right shoulder, just like that I had in my left, in my last rheumatism but one. Bless me, Charles, what a habit you have, of not wiping your feet at the street door—the stair carpets are all of a mess.

Chas. Bless me, uncle, I beg your pardon—I have not been accustomed to a bachelor's house.

Sir L. Ay, Charles, that is it; you mean, you never were privy to an old-bachelor's peculiarities: look to yourself, then, and take care; take warning of me. That ever I should live to be a scare-crow!

Chas. They tell me, sir, that you were very like what I now am.

Sir L. Umph! there is a resemblance indeed; but you have not got quite the dimple I had in my chin. Oh! you need not look for it now, you'll see a wrinkle instead; but take warning, I say—have you thought of our late conversation?

Chas. Sir Lawrence, my dear uncle; almost anything I would willingly do to oblige you—but matrimony, no—there I must be obstinate.

Sir L. And why, pray, why?

Chas. Oh! I adore the sex; yes, *collectively*, they are my idols; but to one individual of woman kind, never will I bend the knee.

Sir L. That's all stuff; very proper rattle for a boy in his teens; but five-and-twenty ought to be above it. Situated as you are, Charles, it is your duty to marry.

Chas. Ah, sir—duty!—prove that it can be my pleasure, and I shall obey. But why is it my duty?

Sir L. Answer me—are not you my poor, dear, dead brother's only son?

Chas. There's no denying that, uncle.

Sir L. Well, and I having no children of my own, are you not heir to my estate and property?

Chas. Such is at present the fact, sir; but why force a pill down my throat, which *you* could never be induced to swallow—why don't you marry? why don't you hand down both name and fortune in the direct line?

Sir L. Oh, nonsense! I'm too old to marry.

Chas. Not at all; you are very hale—

Sir L. Hale! yes—I hate the word—when you say a man's hale, you only mean he totters on tolerably, considering his age: no man tells another under sixty, he' *hale*—*hale's* a very wintry expression. I wish I had married forty years ago—yes, the younger the better; don't you wait too long; I repeat, it is your duty to marry.

Chas. So I have been told ever since I was nineteen; and, I suppose, that is the reason I have never chosen a wife. Had I been the youngest son of a younger brother, with nothing but a curacy, or a cornet's commission, I dare say I should have been warned against matrimony, and should have run away with an apothecary's daughter, and have been the happy father of *ten little blooming nudities*.

Sir L. Well, Charles, you certainly ought to know best; I dare say you are as obstinate and as headstrong as myself; and I hate obstinacy as I hate—

Chas. Undutiful nephews.

Sir L. No, Charles, you are not undutiful—at least, only on this occasion; and as to hating you, that is impossible.

Chas. Thank you, uncle; and now, for once, I will confess that I am not so obstinate as you seem to imagine. I have really no very decided objection to matrimony.

Sir L. Then, why on earth don't you look about you?

Chas. I do, positively, uncle; I *have* looked, and *am* looking, and *shall* or *will* look. But when I marry, my choice will not be on an every-day woman—my wife must be *perfection*.

Sir L. Oh! of course—at least, you will think her so.

Chas. The world must think her so, or I shall not be content. She must have a faultless face, a faultless mind; she must be beautiful without vanity; graceful without conceit; retiring without *mauvaise honte*; talented without display; agreeable without coquetry; amiable without sentimentality; liberal without ostentation; animated without frivolity—

Sir L. Hold! stop! mercy on me, there's no end to your list.

Chas. All this my wife must be.

Sir L. And pray, Charles, supposing the lady should have as long a list of indispensables; what will become of you?

Chas. I can't say; but we are discussing to very little purpose: I shall never live to see the sort of person I describe

Sir L. Why, really, it will be no very easy matter to find such a one; I admit. Must she sing?

Chas. Like a seraph.

Sir L. Must she draw?

Chas. Like Angelica Kauffman.

Sir L. Must she dance?

Chas. Like a sylph.

Sir L. Well, you really are a most unconscionable person—every accomplishment, and perfect in all! I was going to present you to a fair lady of my acquaintance; but I shall not do so now.

Chas. Don't say so! any friend of yours, as an acquaintance, I can have no objection to. But my wife must be all I describe.

Sir L. All?

Chas. All!

Sir L. Very well, say no more about it. I shall not introduce you to Kate.

Chas. Kate, did you say? Kate! why not? what Kate, which Kate?

Sir L. Oh! never mind; she is not perfection.

Chas. I dare say not. But where is she? who is she?

Sir L. The orphan daughter of General O'Brien, an old Irish friend of mine.

Chas. Irish! oh, I understand—she has a brogue.

Sir L. No, on my honour, she has no brogue.

Chas. Well, what they call a slight Irish accent, then—yes, upon my faith, a mighty pretty, illigant way of talking for a young female.

Sir L. Your ridicule is thrown away, and misapplied. My little friend, Kate O'Brien, has not an atom of her country's accent; though, if she had, I'm sure she has too much good sense to be ashamed of it. However, since you've thought proper to quiz her—I shall not introduce you to her.

Chas. Then I'll be even with you. I'll find out her address—I'll pay her a visit, introduce myself, and declare my worthy uncle sent me.

Sir L. Her address is easily found, for she lives in the next street; but I know you will not have the assurance to call upon her.

Chas. I give you due notice, sir, that I will, and that within this hour; so, uncle, when we meet again, I shall have seen your Wild Irish Girl. [Exit, R.

Sir L. That's the way with them all: tell them they *shall*, and they *won't*; tell them they *shan't*, and they *will*. 'Twas just the same with me—I was desired to marry by father, mother, and maiden aunts, and here I am, like a shrivelled old pea in a pot, at sixty and odd years. If I could but bring these two together, 'twould be something to look at; I should have a chance for a family party on Christmas day, and New-Year's day, and other days, when family men have family parties, and jollifications, and when nobody but old bachelors sit sulkily by themselves. Gad! Charles shan't take the girl by surprise, though! I'll send her a note, and put her on her guard. [Exit, R.

SCENE III.—*An Apartment at Kate O'Brien's.*

Enter SUSAN, R.

Sus. Well, gentlefolks, certainly, are the strangest beings: there's no understanding them. My mistress was born with a silver spoon in her mouth—a silver spoon, did I say? law, it must have been a soup ladle, for she's got all the good things of this world about her; and yet she won't marry, and settle, and make herself agreeable, but goes on refusing and refusing, till, one day or t'other, there'll

be nobody to say "no" to. That's not my way; I've thought the matter over very seriously, and I'm resolved to marry, the first opportunity.

Enter SAM, L.

Who can this be, I wonder. Dear me, a very nice, spruce young man. I wish I had put on my t'other cap.

Sam. What a very fine young person! Pray, ma'am, are you Miss O'Brien's maid?

Sus. I am, sir—her *own* maid.

Sam. Oh! you need not tell me that; I saw at once you were an upper servant. There's lady's maid in all your motions.

Sus. Oh, sir, you're vastly genteel. Pray, may I ask your business?

Sam. I've no business at present; I mean to go into business when I marry; and, when I look at you, I wish that were to be this afternoon.

Sus. You misunderstand me. What brought you here?

Sam. I am come from Sir Lawrence Paragon.

Sus. Are you in his service?

Sam. I'm his nephew's man—his *own* man.

Sus. Oh! you needn't tell me that; I saw at once, you were an upper servant. There's gentleman's gentleman in all your motions.

Sam. But at this present moment, I come from Sir Lawrence Paragon; for he has really nobody in his establishment, at all distinguished or respectable; so he likes to employ me, and I am very obliging. Here's a note for your lady, and it's to be delivered immediately. It sounds very ungallant in me to say, but immediately was Sir Lawrence's word.

Sus. I must run with it to my mistress; she is in her boudoir. [*Trying to peep into the note.*] I hate this three-cornered way of folding notes.

Sam. So do I, madam; it curtails one's information sadly. I hope, madam, you'll visit Sir Lawrence's house-keeper; she is vastly genteel, indeed.

Sus. I do drop in there sometimes. Good morning, sir. Tell Mrs. Fritter I shall soon pay her a visit. I wish you a very good morning.

[*Curtseys affectedly, and exit, L. Sam, R.*]

SCENE IV.—*Kate O'Brien's boudoir—large folding doors in the centre—an elegant couch, with handsome shawl lying on it. Small table, on rollers, chair, &c.*

KATE discovered.

Kate. Heigho! why was I born an heiress? envied by my own sex, perpetually teased by the men, and knowing but too well, that I am sought only for my gold. Of one thing I am resolved: I never will marry, 'till I have good reason to know that I am loved for myself alone.

Enter SUSAN, R.

Sus. A note, madam,—no answer, the young man said. A very nice, genteel looking young man he was, too—

Kate. You think of nothing, Susan, but nice young men. Go about your business.

Sus. Well, I'm sure, there's no harm in that. He was a very nice young man, that I will maintain.

[*Exit through the folding doors.*]

Kate. [After reading the note.] From my good guardian, Sir Lawrence Paragon; and to inform me, as I am to expect a visit from his nephew, he hopes I will appear to the best advantage. I suppose, all my graces now, and none of my airs. [Reads.] "You have only to exert the fascinations you possess, to win his heart, and make me your affectionate uncle."—Thankye kindly, sir—I fear your partiality blinds you. But what shall I do with the nephew? "The woman he marries must be perfection." If he resembles Sir Lawrence, I'm sure to like him; and, if so, I may be tempted to try and win him; but it shall be without displaying one of the perfections, which he has declared to be indispensable. He thinks to take me by surprise; but he shall not find me without a plot.

Enter SUSAN, C.

Susan!

[*Knock without.*]

Sus. Yes, ma'am—[*Aside.*] There is a young gentleman knocking at the door—a very nice looking gentleman—but I don't dare say so.

Kate. Wheel that sofa there. Now for the table. [*Susan wheels table to the front, on which lie a nosegay and a*

portfolio. *Kate, throwing herself on sofa.*] Now, unfold my shawl. There, throw it over my feet. Make haste. Now leave me.

Sus. What can she be about? I think she is out of her lunacies. [*Exit L.*

Enter SERVANT, R.

Ser. Mr. Paragon, madam, is below.

Kate. Show him in. [*Servant shows in Charles, and exit.*]

Chas. Madam, my uncle, Sir Lawrence Paragon, being prevented calling on you, as he intended, I am obliged to introduce myself.—[*Aside.*] She is exceedingly pretty.

Kate. You will excuse my not rising to receive you, sir. Pray sit down. I am very happy—I am very happy to see you. The nephew of my father's old friend, must always be welcome here.

Chas. [*Aside.*] Come, there's no brogue, however. Her manner is enchanting.—Madam, you are very kind. I am afraid I've called at an unseasonable hour; I have disturbed you; you are reposing—perhaps you were sleeping—possibly dreaming.—[*Aside.*] I wonder she doesn't get up.

Kate. No, sir; you could not have called more opportunely. I have been looking over this endless portfolio of drawings.

Chas. Drawings! are you fond of the art?

Kate. Excessively! I could look at them for ever.

Chas. [*Aside.*] Accomplished creature! I always said, that when I did fall in love, it would be at first sight; and I do believe my time is come at last.

Kate. What a delightful art painting is! to be able to perpetuate the features of those who are dear to us.

Chas. Charming!

Kate. Or to treasure up some remembrances of scenes in which we have been happy, but which we may never look upon again.

Chas. Delightful!

Kate. Or to copy the classical groups of antiquity, or form new combinations of graceful, lovely figures.

Chas. Oh! your enthusiasm quite enchants me.

Kate. Oh! you are enthusiastic, also?

Chas. Oh, prodigiously! Pray, my dear madam, allow

me to feast my eyes upon some of your drawings.—[*Aside.*] Angelic creature!

Kate. Sir—sir, what did you say?

Chas. Permit me to see one of your performances.

Kate. I regret to say, I never had the least idea of drawing; my houses, my trees, and my cattle, are all one confused jumble of scratches.

Chas. Not draw?

Kate. No—do you?

Chas. I? Oh, no! But I quite misunderstood you. I thought—[*Aside.*] Dear me! what a pity such a sweet creature should lack such a resource, such an accomplishment!

Kate. Is anything the matter, sir?

Chas. Oh, nothing.—[*Aside.*] After all, it is but one. I've no doubt she has all the rest.

Kate. Did you speak?

Chas. I was saying, I never heard so musical a voice.

Kate. Oh, you flatter me. You mention music—do you not doat on it?

Chas. Ah! there we do agree. The woman who sings!

Kate. Yes, sir,

Chas. The woman who plays!

Kate. Yes, sir.

Chas. The woman who does both well, is a divinity. You are an enthusiast in your love of music: I see you are.

Kate. I am, sir: music is my passion! music in the morning; music in the evening; music at the silent hour of night; music on the water—

Chas. What a woman she is!

Kate. Music at any hour.

Chas. Yes, or on any instrument.

Kate. Oh, yes; from the magnificent organ, to the gentle lute.

Chas. Delicious!

Kate. Or a voice—better than all, a soul-enchanting voice.

Chas. [*Aside.*] There is no resisting her.—Oh, madam, sing.

Kate. Alas, sir! how shall I make the sad confession? much as I love music, I can only listen.

Chas. What ?

Kate. I have not a singing note in my voice ; and no one could ever teach me to play.

Chas. [*Aside.*] Was there ever such an impostor !—Madam, you positively astonish me.

Kate. How so, sir—can you sing ?

Chas. Oh, no ; men are not expected to acquire those accomplishments ; but a woman—that is—I—I—

Kate. I know, sir : you were going to say, that a woman, without them, is little better than a brute.

Chas. Madam, how can you suppose—

Kate. Ay, sir, and I perfectly agree with you—but, sir, 'tis my misfortune, and not my fault.

Chas. [*Aside.*] What a pensive tone of voice, and what a countenance ! there can be no humbug there. Spite of all her lamentable deficiencies, I am fascinated.

Kate. My fate is an unhappy one—I am an orphan, as you know, and, of course, labouring under such defects, I never mean to marry.

Chas. Never mean to marry ?

Kate. Never !

Chas. Oh, madam, in mercy to mankind, make not so rash, so inconsiderate a resolve.

Kate. Sir, it is in mercy to mankind I make it. What would be a fond husband's sufferings, were he to see the wife of his bosom sinking under the degrading consciousness that she was unworthy of him ?

Chas. Unworthy !

Kate. Would he not cast her from him ! Yes, yes, he would do so—I must live on unloved.

Chas. [*Aside.*] By Jove ! she is irresistible !—Madam, I adore you—listen to me ; oh, listen, and smile on me—hear me : I love you—oh ! love me, pray do ! [*Kneels.*

Kate. Sir, this is so unlooked-for, so unexpected.

Chas. Nay, do not frown upon me ; allow me to hope.

Kate. Rise, sir ; you may hope—but the surprise, the agitation—pray ring that bell.

Chas. [*Aside.*] She's going to faint. [*Rings bell, L.*

Kate. So, then, I must retire. My maid shall return, and speak a few words to you ; and then, after having seen your uncle, you may visit me again.

Enter SUSAN, c.

Come here, Susan.

[*Whispers her.*]

Sus. La, madam, is it possible?

Kate. Obey me instantly. Call the servant.

Sus. John, come here, instantly.

Enter JOHN.

Chas. [*Aside.*] What on earth does she want? Why don't she get up?

Kate. Now, Susan, open the doors. John, wheel the sofa into the other room. Adieu, sir; my maid shall return immediately.

[*She is wheeled into the next room, and the door closes.*]

Chas. Well, positively, that is the laziest proceeding I ever witnessed. By the by, 'twas all my fault. I suppose she was too faint to move. Oh, here comes the maid.

Enter SUSAN, c.

Sus. [*Aside.*] Well, mistress is mad, that's certain; but I must do as I'm bid.

Chas. How is your mistress? She is a charming creature. What a happy girl you are—what a sweet mistress you have got!

Sus. She is charming—poor thing!

Chas. Poor thing! what do you mean by poor thing?

Sus. Oh, it's very sad.

Chas. What is sad?

Sus. You saw my mistress whisper me?

Chas. Yes, to be sure! but there's nothing so sad in a whisper.

Sus. Indeed, but there is, though. She desired me to reveal the affair to you: she had not courage to tell you herself. To be sure, you must have known it, sooner or later.

Chas. What do you mean? You frighten me out of my wits.

Sus. It's a sad affliction, to be sure—a very great defect—she's much to be pitied.

Chas. A defect? another defect? and I have committed myself—I've proposed—

Sus. Oh, sir!

Chas. Speak out, do.

Sus. Many years ago—

Chas. That's as bad as "once upon a time." Pray go on—make haste.

Sus. My mistress was thrown from her horse—

Chas. Yes—well, she was not *killed*, so what then?

Sus. [*Pretending to weep.*] Fractured limb—

Chas. Oh! what limb?

Sus. Leg—broke all to bits, and—

Chas. Well, speak.

Sus. Amputation—

Chas. What?

Sus. She has got a cork leg.

Chas. A *cork leg*! Horror! What have I done? engaged myself—I shall go mad!

Sus. Good morning, sir. I must go, if you please, to give my mistress the stick.

Chas. Do, by all means. [*Exit Susan.*] I deserve the stick worst. I, that said I would marry perfection—I've bound myself to the fraction of a woman. [*Exit, R.*]

SCENE V.—Room at Sir Lawrence Paragon's.

Enter SUSAN and SAM, L.

Sam. So, you say my master is actually going to marry her? Bless the man, they'll be a three-legged couple—a matrimonial tripod. Had he seen you, when he proposed for the lady?

Sus. Oh! yes—why?

Sam. Then I wonder at him—that's all.

Sus. Oh! you flatter.

Sam. Let me see. You stand pretty stoutish on your pins, don't you?

Sus. Nonsense. I'll hear no such remarks.

Sam. Gad! I never saw neater timbers. You can stir your stumps with the best of them. That ever my master should marry a hoppikelky!

Sus. You'll not use such nicknames, if you please.

Sam. Don't be angry—but, you know, she has a timber toe. Why, my master always used to say, his wife should be perfection; and now he takes a woman whose body turns on a pivot. Here he comes, as if he was hunting after your mistress's other leg.

Sus. I'll leave you, then, Sam. My presence will only make him worse. I suppose I shall see him by and by at Miss O'Brien's. Oh, they'll be a sweet couple. [*Exit, L.*

Sam. Sweet couple! couple of ducks, standing on one leg, with the other tucked under the left wing.

Enter CHARLES, L.

Chas. I wonder if the wind is fair for America. Not that any other place wouldn't do as well; only the farther off the better.

Sam. Do you dress for dinner, sir? What shall I put out?

Chas. Out of my way, sir. I'll not change. Oh, Sam, Sam, I'm going to change my condition; I'm going to be married!

Sam. Married! Oh, what a lady you must have seen! I never thought you would have found one perfect enough. At all events, when she saw you, sir, I warrant she put her best foot foremost.

Chas. Best foot! Oh, Sam!—but it doesn't signify. Where's my uncle?

Sam. He is coming, sir.

Chas. Then you'll begone. You'll have to go in mourning for me, very soon. Oh, Sam! Sam!

Sam. [*Aside.*] Master's mad. I suppose it's all along of love. [*Exit, L.*

Enter SIR LAWRENCE, R.

Sir L. [*Aside.*] Foolish girl—I hate all plots. She has told me of her mad schemes. I must not frustrate them. Here is the inconsolable. I must affect ignorance.—Well, Charles, you have seen her, I suppose? How is this? you seem agitated. What's the matter?

Chas. Agitated! well I may be, sir.

Sir L. Explain.

Chas. I have at least done what you wished me—to make a long story short, I've offered Miss O'Brien my hand and heart.

Sir L. No! you delight me. Tol de rol!

Chas. Oh! don't dance about, uncle; you'll bring on your rheumatism. It's no dancing business, I assure you.

Sir L. I never was so happy. Is she not perfect?

Chas. Perfect! Ah, sir! that is as all people may think. I fear you have not seen her lately.

Sir L. Not lately—no—but is she not indeed perfection? Yes, and so you have already thrown yourself at her feet.

Chas. Feet! I wish that were possible.

Sir L. Well, now my fondest hopes are realised. I thought she would take steps to ingratiate herself in your favour.

Chas. Take steps! Heigho!

Sir L. I knew how it would be; and I will say this for you, Charles, she is a fortunate girl; there's many a one would be glad to step into her shoes.

Chas. Shoes! alas! he knows not what he says. She knows the substantive shoe only in the singular number;—she never buys a pair. What are rights and lefts to her!

Sir L. You look as if you were in a hobble.

Chas. A hobble, sir? You lacerate me.

Sir L. How is this! sighing! you have made but a lame love affair, I am afraid. But now tell me: you always said the woman you married should possess every accomplishment, every perfection. Of course, she draws.

Chas. Why, no—she doesn't exactly possess that accomplishment.

Sir L. Not draw? dear—that can't be helped. Of course, she sings?

Chas. With humiliation, I confess she cannot sing.

Sir L. Well, well; never mind; don't be cast down. At all events, her dancing makes amends.

Chas. Sir, she is unable to dance.

Sir L. Oh, nonsense; you are jesting. I shall live to see you foot it together.

Chas. Foot it! she can't foot it.

Sir L. Not foot it?—pooh! I'll make her foot it—she shall dance with me—egad, I'll invite all the country round; ay, and I'll give her a hop.

Chas. It must be a hop, if she has anything to do with it. But every word you say wounds me deeply, sir. The fact is, she's a miserable object.

Sir L. A what?

Chas. Mutilated.

Sir L. Halt! young man, halt!

Chas. That's it, sir—she is halt.

Sir L. What do you mean, young man?

Chas. She has a cork leg.

Sir L. A cork leg?

Chas. You know the whole truth.

Sir L. My dear Charles—but did you propose?

Chas. Alas! I did. I knew not of her misfortunes, till afterwards—but I have committed myself, and, as a man of honour, I cannot retract.

Sir L. Oh, dear me, Charles—my dear Charles, my poor boy, my own nephew, this must not be. You were not aware—you *must* not, shall not be aware. You shall not marry her. Go to her; say I sent you; pretend to be in despair: say I forbid you to marry her; say anything; apologize; explain. Lay all upon me. You must be extricated. I'll go and consult my lawyer. Cheer up, my lad, all will end well.—[*Aside.*] That it will. No fear now; it will be a match. [*Exit, R.*

Chas. Poor girl—poor Kate; poor, dear, melancholy, mutilated Kate. Why, how is this? am I not in love? What am I about to do? renounce her? she is unfortunate—no, no. Leave her to limp through the world alone? I'm no such cold-hearted coward. I'll fly to her, and offer her this arm to lean on through life. [*Exit, R.*

SCENE VI.—*Kate O'Brien's boudoir—guitar on table, drawings, &c.—KATE discovered.*

Kate. Will he come? alas, no! I fear not. How can I expect it. Hark! is not that his step? yes, yes, 'tis he; and I am safe. [*Springs on sofa.*

Enter CHARLES, R.

You come, then, once more. You are welcome. You come to bid me farewell.

Chas. No, you wrong me. I come to claim your hand.

Kate. Ha! consider—you will repent too late.

Chas. No, I will not repent. When I offered to be your protector and friend, I knew not how much you needed both; and now, that I do know it, do you think that I will desert you? Never!

Kate. Generous man! take my hand, and when I forget your kindness, neglect and spurn me. I have already endeavoured to show my sense of your goodness—I have prepared a surprise for you. You seemed disappointed at my not being able to draw. In your absence, I have endeavoured to make a sketch. Here it is.

Chas. Wonderful! what a likeness! 'tis your own portrait.

Kate. I'm glad you think it like. Take it; and remember, 'twas my first gift.

Chas. Thanks! a thousand thanks.

Kate. You are fond of music, too. Like most young ladies, when they are asked to sing, I refused at first—but now, if you press me sufficiently, I may be induced to own, I can sing a little.

Chas. Pray, sing—I—I implore—

[*Kate takes the guitar and sings.*

[*Song.*]—"Kate Kearney."

Chas. The very style I dote on. I'm transported, perfectly! And, now, what new surprise have you?

Kate. Only one.

[*A pause. She springs from the sofa, with the guitar.*

Chas. Take care—you will hurt yourself. Lean on me. [*Kate sings and dances.*] What am I to think?

Kate. Think, only, they've brought machinery to very high perfection.

Chas. Impossible! nay, your leg never was fractured.

Kate. It never was.

Chas. Huzza! my wife's perfection. She has feet—and thus I fall at them. [*Kneels.*

Enter SIR LAWRENCE, L.

Sir L. Keep him there, Kate—let him always be your slave.

Chas. Oh, uncle, she is perfection! I am the happiest dog alive.

Sir L. I knew her scheme, and the result delights me. But, remember, your vanity has been humbled. You vowed you would marry perfection—you! as if you deserved such a wife; and now I have seen you implore a girl to have you, who you thought had no accomplishments, and only one leg to stand on

Chas. I own it—yes, Kate—after all, I suppose, it must be admitted that I have not met with that monster, a perfect woman ; for you, certainly, displayed one little failing.

Kate. Well, what is it, pray ?

Chas. Fibbing ! A cork*leg ! Oh, fie !

Kate. Nay, I told you no fib.

Chas. How so ?

Kate. I have a *cork* leg—absolutely *two* cork legs—for I was born in Cork, in the province of Munster, in my own dear native Ireland.

Chas. Cork ! Well, Sir Lawrence, we must admit she is a cork model of a perfect woman.

Sir L. Too good for you, depend upon it. Oh, that I had married such a woman !

Kate. Well, after all, perhaps some may imitate me, with advantage ; for I concealed from my *lover* some of the accomplishments I possess ; and, consequently, my husband, finding me so much better than he expected, may think me *perfection*. And if those around me think favourably of the Maid of Munster, she cares not how often her lameness may return ; for she will trust for her support to their indulgent kindness.

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF
THE CURTAIN.

CHARLES.

KATE O'BRIEN.

SIR LAWRENCE.

{L.

THE END.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 815 332 2

